

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd in the
Church of ALL-SAINTS
IN
B R I S T O L,

OCTOBER 29. 1721.

Upon the DEATH of
EDWARD COLSTON, Esq;

By JAMES HARCOURT, D. D.
Vicar of *All-Saints*, and Prebendary of *Bristol*.

Publisht at the Request of the TRUSTEES.

To which is annex'd an ABSTRACT of the several CHARITIES given by the Deceas'd.

L O N D O N: Ⓞ

Printed for R. STANDFAST in *Westminster-Hall*, and Sold by *W. Corfely* in *Bristol*, and *Sam. Wilmot* in *Oxon.* 1721.

SEYMOUR

Church of the Holy Trinity
New York

SEYMOUR

Records and Minutes

of the

EDWARD COLSTON



of the

Church of the Holy Trinity

New York

Francis Colston, Esq;

Tho. Edwards, Sen. } *Henry Hoare, Esq;*
Tho. Edwards, Jun. } *AND*
 Mr. Robert Carre.

Executors and Trustees to
EDWARD COLSTON, Esq;

Gentlemen,

WHEN You desir'd
that this Discourse
might be made pub-
lick, I offer'd several Reasons
against it. The Reader will easily
discover them ; and, I fear, will
judge, that I ought not to have

yielded at last to your Importunity. The Subject is of such a Nature, that tho' it be extremely easie to speak upon, yet is it not so easie to do Justice to it; at least in so narrow a Compass, and so short a Time as I have had. If a good and warm Inclination will be any Excuse for an Attempt on this Occasion, mine is entitled to it, and to all the Allowances of the greatest Regard. This the more readily prevail'd with me to submit, and hope that the World will be as favourable as you have been. After your kind Promise of annexing to this imperfect Discourse, an Abstract of Mr. COLSTON's several Valuable Charities, I should have been

been very unjust to the World as well as the Memory of so Eminent a Person, had I denied your Request: And the Charge of Ingratitude wou'd have lain against me, after Your Leave, to recommend it to the World under your Patronage. Whose Reputation must for ever, amongst all good Men, be esteem'd, and distinguish'd, even by this particular Honour, That this GREAT BENEFACTOR has repos'd in You, the Execution of His WILL, and the Trust of His CHARITIES.

I am,

Gentlemen,

Bristol
Nov. 2.
1721.

Your most oblig'd, and
most humble Servant,

JAMES HARCOURT.

been very painful to the World

as well as the memory of it

ministers a person had I denied

any thing: and I have

of the Lord's word I have

could mention I have

rejoiced in it to the World

but your Father

rejoiced in it for ever

and I have

and I have

and I have

and I have

and I have

and I have

and I have

and I have

and I have

and I have

and I have

and I have

and I have

and I have

and I have

SERMON

Preach'd upon the

DEATH

OF

Edward Colston Esq; &c.

Psalm cxii. 9.

*He hath dispersed abroad and given to the Poor,
and his Righteousness remaineth for ever,
his Horn shall be exalted with Honour.*

THE Royal Preacher in these Words
consider'd with the Context, gives
us the Description of a good Man,
and the Happiness he is rewarded
with, in consequence of that Character.
His Character as he is here call'd, *the Man*

B. 2

that

8. A SERMON Preach'd upon

that feareth the Lord, * is drawn up in these Particulars: In his being Gracious and full of Compassion, in his *dispersing abroad and giving to the Poor*; and the Reward is describ'd, as of two kinds, Internal and External. The Internal consists in that firmness of Mind, which he here describes, by *his Heart standing fast*, † and the external Reward is set forth, by the *exaltation of his Horn with Honour*, by *his Righteousness being had in everlasting Remembrance*, and by its *remaining for ever*: In the everlasting Remembrance of all Ages in this Life, and remaining with him for ever in the Life to come. This is the Character of a good Man, and these the Rewards that attend him.

The Man, who thus feareth the Lord, is pronounc'd by God himself to be Blessed, and, I humbly conceive, that the Venerable Person, to whose Ashes we have lately perform'd our last Offices, may, without the least imputation of Flattery, be said to have come up to this Character.

The Guilt of Flattery is at all Times detestable, and be the Persons commended ever so Eminent and Worthy, yet if the Applause given, be either improper or superior to the Merit, even that Applause must be highly Criminal, by whom, and in what Place soever it is bestow'd. Extremely great then must

* Verse 1.

† Verse 7.

must be the Aggravations and Heinousness of this Vice, when it proceeds from those Persons, whose Lips ought to preserve Truth, as well as Knowledge; from them, whose Duty it is, as by their Precepts, so by their Practice, to teach the World, that they must think lowly of themselves, that they are but unprofitable Servants, and that they must bring down that Vanity and Pride, with which our Hearts are too easily apt to swell; and it will heighten yet more the deep dye of this Sin, when it is proclaim'd within those sacred Walls, wherein dwells the God of Truth, and wherein we are in the more immediate Presence of that Being, who is the Searcher of all Hearts.

I am not, however, under any Apprehensions of incurring that Guilt at this Time; I have more Reason to fear, that I shall not do Justice to the Memory of that Excellent and Pious Man, who has so eminently deserv'd, to be had by us in everlasting Remembrance. Towards which, that I may contribute, what in me lies, I shall follow the Method preferib'd by the *Psalmist*, and by considering the Words which I have read with the Context, as therein is imply'd the whole Character and Reward, as far, at least, as it regards this Life, from hence endeavour to shew with Respect to that excellent Person, whom we now Commemorate,

1. How well he answer'd the Character here given, and

2. How far he did enjoy the promis'd Reward, even in this Life.

First then, I am to shew, how well that excellent Person, whom we now commemorate, answer'd the Character of the good Man here describ'd.

A Subject this so large and extensive, that to do Justice to it, necessarily will oblige me to enumerate almost every kind of Charity, whereby we can promote the Glory of God, or relieve, as they relate either to their Bodies, or their Souls, the Necessities of our Fellow-Creatures: Instances in so many having been given, by this sincere Lover of God, and Friend of Man. Scarcely any sort of temporal Calamity has escap'd his charitable Assistance; nor is there scarcely one spiritual Want, towards the removing of which, he has not piously and freely afforded his Contribution. In short, the Charities which have taken either their Foundation, or Improvement from his open Hand, are so numerous, that, when in Justice to his pious Memory, for the Good of Mankind, and to incite others to the Exercise of this Christian Grace, the World shall be oblig'd with the particular Account of them, the Variety will appear so great, as to surprize, and the Immenfeness of the Sums expended and laid

laid out in them, will be judg'd extremely large, when it shall be considered, that they are the Charity of one Private Person.

So faithful a Steward has this good Man been, for God, and for his own Soul, that the Poor, Youth and Aged, in Private and in Publick, in several Parts of the Nation, and most eminently in this Place, have long been, and are for ever to be Reliev'd, and Supported by his Charity; in Schools, for the Education, the Maintenance, and Cloathing of Children, and in Hospitals and Alms houses, for the comfortable Retirement of the Aged and decay'd; thereby providing for their well-being in this Life, and for their eternal Happiness in that to come. The Widow, and the Fatherless, those who are reduc'd through the Frowns of the World; those who never have been capable of supporting themselves, and much less their Families; those who are past their Labours, and who, as it were, have labour'd to be Poor, at least, thro' their utmost Industry, have not been able to raise and preserve themselves above the Misery of Want: Each of these find their Supply from his Charity. From hence the Ignorance of the Young, the Miseries of the Infirm, and the helpless Necessities of the Old, are remov'd, eas'd and reliev'd.

But not to enlarge further this general Account, it will at this time be proper, that I endeavour to lay before you the particular

Instances which we know, of his *d'spersing abroad and giving* to the Poor. Of these, some are transitory, and end with his Life, others are permanent; and endure for ever. Under the former of these;

Enquire among the private Families of the Poor, and many of them surely will confess, That their continual Support has been deriv'd from his Bounty: *That the Poor without Covering, and those who were perishing for want of Cloathing, were warm'd with the Fleece of his Sheep, have eaten of his Morsel, and that their Loins had blessed him.* *

View the several Charity Schools; in other Places, as well as in this City, and learn how many are rais'd; with the kind Support of his Hand: Learn to how large a Number in other Parts of the Nation, and that to every School erected in this Place, his Charity, tho' it be not to be annexed for ever, yet that it is to be continued to each of them for several Years after his Decease: From whence it will appear, that even in these Respects he has been a generous Contributor; and may with great Propriety be said, *to have dispers'd abroad.*

Had these been the whole of his publick good Works, how glorious ought even these to have made his Name among Men: That he should thus delight to relieve the Miseries
of

of the Aged Poor; those, who without such Assistance, must perhaps, many of them, have worn out the Remains of the most forlorn and mean Life, under the Want of necessary Sustenance for their Bodies: And that he should thus delight, in removing the Ignorance of those, who through the narrow Circumstances of their Parents, and the Tenderness of their Years, are in a Condition the most helpless, and must, hard Necessity! have pass'd their Lives, the most unacquainted with that God, who is their Heavenly Father, whose sacred Name they too commonly know, only to profane it; the most unacquainted with that blessed Saviour, in whose Name they have been Baptiz'd, and thro' Faith in whose Sufferings they are to hope for eternal Happiness; and the most unacquainted with that Communion, and Worship of that Church, wherein the Faith in Christ is taught in the most primitive Purity, whose Glory it is, that she instructs her Members to believe in their Saviour, by keeping his Commands, and to shew the incorruptness of their Faith, by their Brotherly Love. From this slight View of those, which I would distinguish by the Name of his transitory Charities, how considerate in their Value, and in their Usefulness do they appear, and yet how small a Share have these engag'd of his Goodness? To know which more perfectly, let us turn our Thoughts and Eyes

to those which are Permanent, and to endure for ever. And

Amongst these, first represent to your Thoughts, what Provision he has made for Aged Persons in other Places; and to make this Impression deeper on your Souls, Behold that Venerable Sight! Behold those Aged Persons! * and in them consider the helpless Condition of the Widow; consider the the Misery of those, who have worn out their Strength, and lost their Substance in the Storms and Tempests of the Sea; consider the great unhappiness of such, as once by their honest Industry in their Callings have been able to contribute to the Poor, and are now through Adversity, and the vicissitude of Fortune, themselves become just Objects of Charity; and consider, that through this great Man's Beneficence to them, is afforded, a most convenient and honourable Retirement. In which, after they have been try'd by Calamities, Affliction and Misfortune, after they have been toss'd and wreck'd upon the Waves of this troublesome World, they enjoy the comfortable Support and the Conveniencies of this Life, and the inestimable Advantage of the daily Worship of God: There to atone for their past Iniquities, and daily to improve in Repentance and Holiness;

* The old Men, Women, and Children were present, when this Sermon was Preach'd.

ness; there daily to implore the divine Mercies, and to acknowledge the Goodness of God in their bounteous Founder: There daily to have their Conversation in Heaven, and to prepare their Souls more and more for the blessed Mansions of eternal Glory. Consider the happy Condition which these enjoy, and it must incite in our Souls a most lively Sense of the Love of God, inflame our Affections, and endear to every one, who has the least regard to Holiness and Religion, the Memory and Name of that Person, whose Soul it hath pleas'd God, to possess in so high a Degree, with this heavenly Grace of Charity. Impossible will it be, that we should know these Things, and be unmov'd, if we are not lost to all Sense of Humanity as well as Religion; impossible will it be, that we shall not break forth into Joy, and with all good Men, and with the heavenly Host, join in Praise, and Hallelujah's to God, who has thus visited, and that has had Respect unto Men; who has thus rais'd up in our degenerate Age, so Great, so Christian a Lover of Souls, and set so glorious a Pattern for Imitation in this Place, which is so capable of it, by its Riches and Prosperity, and is so fruitful in the Occasions for it.

But how agreeable soever the Reflections may be, which our Souls are entertain'd with, from that Venerable Sight; what an Improvement

ment will they receive, when we carry on our View, and behold that glorious Number of Children: Those lively Patterns of Innocence and Simplicity, of Humility and Meekness, of Love and Charity: Those beauteous Instances of exemplary Goodness, which give a Lustre to the Memory of the best Man, are the noblest Ornament of this City, and no mean Part of its Safety and continual Preservation. Who can consider the Innocence and Pleasure of their Life, the Usefulness and Perfection of their Education, and, not only for the former, but for this singular Charity, give to God the Praise, for so much Good done to the Sons of Men! and not revere the Memory of one, who has added so many to the Number of true Christians?

His particular unassisted Charity, does and will qualify Thousands, to live Godly, Righteously, and Soberly in this World, and thereby to hope, that they may inherit that Salvation, of which by their Baptism, they became Heirs; and yet, without this pious Care which is taken to inform their tender Years, and to nurture their Souls in the Fear of the Lord, how great their Danger would be, of falling into unhappiness and Contempt here, and of being for ever miserable, is too grievous an Observation, to be long dwelt upon, and what, to our endless Shame, we

we have still too frequent Instances of, to require further Proof.

Zeal for the Honour of God is then doubtless most religiously and unquestionably shown, when the Instances we express it by, in the most effectual manner, at the same time, promote the Divine Glory, and our Love for our Fellow-Creatures. Those, above whom we are plac'd in this World, no other-wise than by the accidental Distinctions of good Fortune. *Did not he, that made me in the Womb, make the meanness of our Brethren?* * and what has the greatest among Men, that he did not receive? The Excellence then of this Charity cannot require much Labour, to make the Impression of it deep upon our Souls, and its Usefulness will most easily appear, if we consider, with what Weight the Allurements of Sin always engage us in every Part of Life. For, tho' the Struggles and Contests between the Corruptions of Nature, and the Suggestions of the Spirit be continual, yet our Weakness, especially in our younger Years, must make the Offers of Grace often ineffectual, when we want the Assistance of that Care and Guidance, which is necessary, to keep our Feet from going astray, to which they so easily incline, and to direct them, to the Paths of Righteousness and Peace, in which

C

they

they should walk, and which they so industriously avoid. Our Passions then are violent and strong, and the solicitations to Vice extremely agreeable, so that our Danger, at that Age, in which we are most inapprehensive of it, and least capable of making Resistance, is certainly the greatest. Amongst those whose, natural Temper and Disposition seem to encourage our good Hopes of them; even amongst those, how many are there, who for want of this Care, either by the Neglect or Inability, or Death of their Parents and Sureties, have grown harden'd in Sin, before they have been of Age, to understand, and take upon themselves, the Obligation of their Baptismal Vow? And may we not too justly fear their Number to be great, who for want of proper Guides, to instruct them in the Rudiments, and to confirm them in the Principles of Religion, have yielded themselves a Prey to every Sin, which thro' the tenderness of their Years, they have been able to comply with? How frequent are the Complaints, which we hear from those of full Age, who have unhappily been train'd up, when Children, in other Ways, than those in which they shou'd go; who have spent their Youth in the Slavery of Sin, and are at length softned into a Sense of their Misery, and resolv'd to devote the small remainder of their Days to Sorrow and Repentance?

Think

Think, how low the Depths of Sin must be, into which they have sunk, and through which they have waded: How grievous the Anguish of their Souls must be, that the Work of their whole past Life is to be undone, every evil Habit of which; is perhaps heinous enough, to require the whole Age of Man to make an Attonement for: Think, how difficult the Task is, to renounce a bosom and habitual Sin, what Uneasiness we undergo in the Resistance we make to its Importunities, with what Unwillingness we take Shame unto our selves, and with what Pain we bear the Remorse of our Conscience? Think, on the ineffable Delight of a Soul truly penitent, on him who has made his Peace with God, and goes down to his House justified; that even the Pleasure of such a Soul is not equal, with what he enjoys, who has always been obedient, to whom the *Father says, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.* In short, think on the Misery of continuing in the Hazard of recovering from Sin, and the afflicting Difficulty of Repentance, on the one hand, and the uninterrupted Joy of constant Obedience, on the other: Then may we be able to form a just Notion, and to set a proper Value upon those excellent Benefactions, whereby our tender Years are thus

thus guarded, improv'd, and provided for; then, shall we most truly judge, how inestimable is their Happiness, who have their Minds thus form'd to early Holiness; the Byass of their Passions restrain'd under its proper Limitations, and their Souls inflam'd with the continual Desire of loving and obeying God: Then, shall we truly judge how great has been the Charity of that Venerable Person, who, by his single Gift has provided, that so many Children shall be instructed in the Principles of true Religion, virtuously brought up, and taught at the same time to be both Useful and Pious; to be, by his Bounty, the Honour and Glory of the present, and by their Education and Religion, to become the Advantage, Comfort, and Security of every succeeding Generation in the World; to continue amongst Men, the Memory of so exemplary a Person, to advance the Prosperity and Safety of their Fellow-creatures, to set forth the Glory of God, and to secure their own Salvation; then lastly, shall we truly judge, what evident Reason, all Mankind, and more peculiarly, we of this Place, have from these good Works, to give God the Glory, and to use our earnest Endeavours, that our Imitation may express the Sense we have of so eminent a Goodness and Love.

Infinite

Infinite are the other Advantages of this Charity, if we consider the Influence which it must have upon their Souls, whose Infancy has been cherish'd, and whose Prosperity, as well as Religion, is owing to that Knowledge, which by these means they have been advanc'd to. What Thoughts must these Men have, when grown to be wealthy and considerable in the World, of the Excellence of Charity? What Regard and Diligence must it oblige them, and, by their Example, others to use, in the Care and Education of their young Ones? And consequently, how universal must be the Advantage of it to Religion in general, as well as to those, whose Happiness it has been, to have had the Benefit of this in particular? But the Time will not allow me to enlarge on these Considerations, whilst his other Charities equally permanent and glorious, as justly demand, by us, to be had in everlasting Remembrance.

Such is the unhappiness of the Age, in which we live, the Instances of eminent Virtue are so common, that his Reputation, in whom there is but the bare Image and Resemblance of a single Virtue, shall soon spread and grow; but where the Exercise of any one is real, and proceeds from a Mind Religiously dispos'd, it cannot long continue single; every Virtue is in this Sense social: Doubtless then, whosoever practises Charity upon Christian Principles, it is not

in the Power of his Will, not to be Liberal and Munificent. Thus, we may observe, that this excellent Man, could no more confine the Instances of his Virtue, to Charity in particular, than he could the Actions, whereby he exemplified that Virtue, to this Place alone, towards which, in the exercise of it, he has shewn so especial a Regard and Love.

The Church of God, as establish'd in this Nation, it was his Honour to be in Communion with, and he was the Glory of it. In this he was Educated, and the Faith taught in it, he always firmly believed, and his whole Life exemplify'd that Faith, in a constant Practice of uniform Obedience. In this, as he was train'd up, and from a Child had known the holy Scriptures, * had been nourish'd up in the Words of Faith and of good Doctrine; † so he always held fast the Form of sound Words; and that Piety, which in his younger Years ow'd its growth to the Example and Care of others, distinguish'd his Practice, as the result of his own Judgment and his own Resolution of Holiness, as soon as he was capable of taking upon himself the Obligation of his Baptismal Vow. Of this steady and constant religious Care, and Sence, he gave the clearest Proof, not only by his general Conduct in his younger Days, but by his

* 1 Tim. 3. 15.

† 1 Tim. 4. 6.

his remarkable Diligence, his exemplary and pious Devotion, when ever he was present at the Publick Worship: And the just Sense he had of the Benefits, which he receiv'd thereby, his exalted Love of the Beauty of Holiness, in the establish'd Liturgy of the Church of *England*; and the zealous Care for the Glory of God, soon engag'd him, to provide, that the daily Service of the Church, and Catechizing should be perform'd in his Hospitals and Alms-houses, those Nurseries for Religion; and Retirements for Holiness.

It was no small trouble to his Soul, to think, that any should be destitute of this Blessing, and more especially those, who, too commonly thro' the Neglect of it, have incurr'd the greatest Guilt, by their violation of humane as well as the Divine Laws; those in Prison, who have by his Piety, more frequent Returns of those blessed Opportunities, of publick Confession and Repentance, of interceding for each other, of hearing the Word of God, and of receiving Instructions, how they ought to humble their Souls, for those crying Sins, which have brought upon them that Shame and Misery in this World, and which, thro' the Earnestness and Sincerity of their Repentance, they may hope to obtain Pardon for, before they enter upon the Life to come. It doubtless was a very great Pleasure to him to follow in those Paths of Goodness, where
others

others had gone before; nor is it to be imagin'd, but that he would have felt an equal Satisfaction, whenever he cou'd observe, that by his Acts of Charity, a Spirit of Emulation was rais'd in other Breasts. From this Principle, he seems sometimes to have confin'd his Generosity, below what the Occasion might require, to make the Action compleat and perfect only with this View, that he might, by this means, engage the Charity of others, to join with him. Is not this particular Action an Instance in each of these Respects? For, tho' he added considerably, to what had been before given, yet is there not still an Opportunity left for others, that by their Charity, the Criminals may be assisted in their Preparatory Devotions, and at their last Hours?

We all know what good Fruit his Piety has rais'd, by that excellent Institution of giving to this People the Benefit of publick Devotion in the Seasons of Lent; when such Subjects, to his immortal Honour, by his own Appointment, are chosen for them, to be instructed in, as shew the Purity of his Faith, the Excellence of our Establish'd Church, in its Doctrine, Worship, and Discipline, and in a great measure the whole Faith and Practice of Man.

Add to this his Liberality in giving towards the Rebuilding, the Repair, and Beautifying the Places of Worship, the Church, of

of God, many of which in this City have receiv'd his generous and repeated Bounty. It would be impious in me, and the Inhabitants of this Parish, not to mention, with Gratitude and Reverence, his especial Liberality to this Church in particular, as for the Rebuilding, and Beauty of it, so for the Opportunities herein given, of weekly Prayers.

Our late Gacious and Pious Queen, of blessed Memory, has left a Monument of everlasting Glory to her Name; whereby, the Miseries and Necessities of those, who wait at the Altar, and whereby the too common and irreligious Reproaches, cast upon the sacred Order, for their Meanness and Poverty, will in time find their Relief. Of this excellent Princess, what our blessed Saviour said to the Woman who pour'd the precious Ointment on his Head, ought likewise also to be said, *That wheresoever this Gospel shall be Preach'd in the whole World, there also shall this, which this Pious Woman hath done, be told for a Memorial of her.* A Benefaction this, of such a Nature, that the Church of England has not one more glorious to recite, amongst all Royal Favours of former Reigns. So truly Pious and Worthy of the Crown she wore, was this Munificence; that amongst all the noble Benefactions for the Glory of God, History does not Record any one pre-

D

ceeding

ceeding Instance, which bears more, than a small Proportion to this great Sum.*

And yet, this wise Steward for God, our generous Benefactor, has succeeded in a Method, which engages others to be Pious, whilst it enlarges this Royal Bounty. His first Gift on this Occasion wanted no Advantages to recommend his Generosity, and the Augmentation he has since made to it, exceeds even the Desires of good Men. So large is this Benefaction, that after all his other immense Sums given in Charity, the Name of Mr. COLSTON does stand highest amongst those, who have added to the *Queen's Bounty*, for *Augmenting the Maintenance of the Poorer Clergy*. †

And what shall I more say! For the Time would fail me to tell of all his Benefactions, as it would to describe the Excellence of his Character, in his private Virtues as well as private Charities; to enumerate his Temperance, his Meekness, the evenness of his Temper, his Patience, his Mortification, and the like, wherein he constantly exercis'd his own Soul; or to reckon up those Sums which he gave annually to the Poor of all Sorts, as from an unknown Hand.* *Who is sufficient for these Things?* What Christian Grace is there, which did not shine forth in his Conduct? For which he was not an
 Illustrious

* Late Bishop of Hereford's Sermon, 1708. † Mr. Egan's Account of the Queen's Bounty. * Heb. 11. 32. † 2 Cor. 2. 16.

illustrious Pattern, tho' he did that, as his Charity in Secret? His Virtues kindled one from the Warmth of the other, and his Substance, like the Widow's Oyl, tho' he was continually drawing from it, was so far from failing, that at the last it run over, and he wanted more Vessels to draw into.*

Before I dismiss this Subject, on which with Pleasure, I could dwell, give me leave to observe, what adds much to the Value of all these good Works, That they were all done by him, whilst he was yet alive. In some Instances, by his Will, new Charities are added to his old Ones: Such however these, that they who receive them, either enjoy'd his more immediate Assistance, when alive; or such, as shew, how diffusive his Goodness was, rather than discover an Inclination in him to defer the Opportunities of promoting publick Charities; and are, if I may so speak, the overflowing of his Bounty. He well knew, that every good Action, which is to take Effect after our Death, and to be executed after our Wills are open'd, is giving what we can no longer possess, and doing, what we can have but little Comfort from here, whatever Reward we may hope for it hereafter. He therefore most wisely guarded against this, and against, what is too commonly

D 2

2 Kings, 4. 6.

monly an infirmity of old Age, the love of Money, and a mind after Earthly Things, which in all others, to whom God has given in a plentiful manner, every thing required for Charity, besides the Heart to do it, raises innumerable Objections, and often destroys many Pious and excellent Resolutions. This Vice is too apt to grow upon us, to take the advantage of our gray Hairs, and the dotage of our Life. The noble Schemes for Charity and good Works, which so many have form'd, in the warmth of their Blood and their Devotion; how frequently have they miscarry'd, when they have been put off, to the cool Thoughts of our old Age; when they have been delay'd, to wait for ripeness in a Season, at which we are cold as Death, our Spirits as unactive as our Bodies, and we as unwilling, to resign our Riches, as our Souls, into his Hands, who gave them? How nearly does the Behaviour of such, resemble that of dying Men, who catch at, grasp and hold fast every thing? Besides, how great is the Hazard that we never may be able to accomplish, what we thus delay the Performance of. We become incapable, not only from the want of disposition, not only from the want of opportunity, but sometimes from the want, even of Power. For Riches certainly make themselves Wings, and fly away.

I insist on this subject the more particularly, not only in hopes thereby to incite those, whom it may concern, seriously to weigh, within their own Breasts, the danger of delaying the Opportunities and the Power, which God has put into their Hands of doing good; that they may pray unto him for Grace, to open their Hearts, and that they may put on *Bowels of Mercy*, whilst it is yet *call'd to day*, not only for these Reasons, but that I may do Justice, in this particular, to our great Benefactor. It was the peculiar Gift of God to him, that his Hand was as extended at the last, as when he first began to distribute and to disperse abroad: And, if he can be said, at any one time, rather than another, to have been more warmly mov'd to Acts of Munificence, his last Years are best intitled to the Glory of them. It must indeed be own'd, that Actions of this kind were so common, in the regular and daily Practice, thro' the whole course of his Life; he was grown so habituated, to these Instances of goodness, that his Progress in them bore some Resemblance of the divine Perfection, when in every subsequent Act of Charity and Munificence, he still excell'd his former, so that we shou'd have more reason for Surprise, if he, who, all the days of his Life, had gone about, doing good, if he, at the close of it, in an Age venerable, for the number of its Years, shou'd have
been

been inclin'd, to alter those pious Habits, which he had been so long contracting. The Grace of God, as I verily believe, is so powerful in its influence over their Souls, who have always liv'd under the Directions of, and in obedience to it, that, tho' we allow the Temptations either from without, or from the Corruptions and Infirmary of Nature, to be ever so strong, yet we must likewise suppose, that it is not much less difficult, for those who are habitual in goodness, to change their course, to leave off doing well, and to do ill; than it is for those, who have been harden'd in Sin, who have long bent under, and are waxen old in wickedness, to break off their evil Habits, and learn to do well.

We shall perhaps have more reason to be confirm'd in this Persuasion, if we consider, what I propos'd, as the ad particular to be spoken to, wherein I am to shew, how far this excellent Man did enjoy the promis'd Reward, even in this Life.

The Reward, as I before observ'd, if we consider the Words I have read, with the Context, is two fold, Internal and External, give me leave to consider briefly each of them. The internal is describ'd to be a firmness of Mind, an Heart not afraid, or weary'd with doing good, under what evil Colours soever, it's Actions may be represented. This
the

the Death of Edw. Colston, Esq.

the Plaintiff makes part of the Reward of a good Man, and this appears very conspicuous, in our great Benefactor, under all the difficulties and Provocations he met with. For how free and disinterested soever his Actions were, tho' they aimed at no other end, than the Benefit of Mankind, and the Glory of God; yet was he not exempted, from what all good Men must expect, and learn to bear, the Reproaches of evil Tongues, and the Difficulties, wherewith designing and wicked Men are apt to delay, and frustrate generous and noble Purposes.

Had he carried on his Actions, with any improper View, he had easily been diverted. Those, who upon Principles of Popularity, Ostentation and Pride, perform Actions, which carry with them the appearance of Charity, and Generosity, soon grow cool in their pursuit. Every check or disappointment, every suspicion of a discovery in their Designs, the Pretence of ill Usage, and Ingratitude, the Unsuccessfulness, and not answering the good End they propose, each of these is sufficient to cancel all the Obligations, Engagements and Designs of promoting or continuing any publick Good, they have thought upon, or contributed towards the support of. But how very different was his Behaviour! On these occasions we find frequent reasons to complain of those,
from

from whom it is expected, both by God and Man, that they should assist with their Contributions, to support the *Charity Schools*, as in others, so more especially in this populous and wealthy *City*; where, without any known Reason, those Subscriptions, which have for the Course of some Years, been continued, are on a sudden stopt, and withdrawn. With regard to these particular Charities, this was foreseen by our wise Benefactor: who, as it were, for these Reasons seems to have us'd this Caution, in the Offers, which he made for their Promotion, that he would largely contribute to every One, on this Condition, that a Sum should be rais'd, to make every, or any of the Schools in this *City*, Perpetual. This however, was one of the smallest Disappointments he met with, and, what he could well bear, because he had other Channels, to let the Streams of his Charity to flow into.

Some Provocations of another Nature, I am inclin'd to draw a Shade over, and to pass by in Silence; as well knowing, that they have been the Reproaches from those, who are Strangers to, at least, not accus'd to Actions that are good. Reproaches, too low for the Notice of this Place, and improper at this Time to be enter'd upon, when the Subject, more peculiarly ours at present, is to recollect as much as may be, of the Virtues,

tues, which shin'd in the Character of this Venerable Person; and to recommend to your Practice, that Charity, both in Word and Deed, for which he was eminently distinguished. Reproaches, which made no other Impression upon his Soul, than to grieve, that Men should so much delight in Evil; nor did they affect his Character otherwise, than as a Shade, to show the Lustre of it, to more Advantage. Reproaches, which have always wanted Truth, and consequently have been of a very short Continuance; and have descended to such Meanness, as to be the impious Attempts of the lowest Sense, as well as Malice. But He, good Man, forgave them, and doubtless interceded for their Forgiveness; and, that God may give them Grace to see, and to repent of their Folly, is the constant Prayer of every sincere Christian.

But, one Reproach offer'd to this excellent, most inoffensive, and Pious Man, I ought not to forbear the mention of; not only in just Regard to his Character, but to the Church of *England*; and that is, that he was a *Papist*. And, I fear, that their Guilt, who have laid this to his Charge, will receive this Aggravation; not only, that they knew not, whether he was one or no, not only, that they did not believe him, to be one, but that they knew him, not to be one; that they knew him to be so far from being a

E

Member

Member of the *Church of Rome*, that, I fear, he was known by those very Persons, to have been a constant Communicant with the *Church of England*; a most zealous Advocate for her Doctrines, Worship, and Discipline, in Opposition to *Popery*, as well as *Fanaticism*, and a most lively and exemplary Son of it. Were it necessary for any Proof, in Confutation of this Reproach, we might appeal to those, who have had the Honour of a more intimate Knowledge of him, as well as to that standing Monument, amongst the Subjects, to be Preach'd upon, in the Course of *Lent-Lectures*, by his own Nomination; from which, if we may believe any Man to be sincere, he, all whose Actions have been so agreeable to the Christian Religion, must be believ'd, by the most unreasonable Gain-sayers, to have liv'd the most stedfast in his Perswasion of the Excellence of the *Church of England*,*and in his just dislike to the Errors, of the *Church of Rome*.*

I will not affirm, that his stedfastness in this Perswasion, induc'd any Persons, to load his Character with this Reproach, nor offer more on this Head, than this Observation, that it must sound extremely harsh, in the Ears of every impartial Judge, that the Imputation of *Popery* shall be fix'd upon any Member of this *Church*, and more especially

* These are two Subjects amongst t^e *Lent-Lectures*.

ly upon him, who has, for so many Years, distinguish'd his great Name, by the Eminence of his good Works. Had this come from any of that Communion, the Honour they had done to their Church, had become their Duty to her; but to hear it from those, who have protested against the Errors of that Church, and who value themselves, for the Abhorrence of those Errors, more than all their other Principles and Practices, is, I am verily perswaded, a Complement, for which, whatever Thanks may be return'd to them, from the *Church of Rome*, they will not deserve many from that Establish'd amongst us. However, he bore, even this Reproach, as became a true Christian, and prov'd by his Behaviour, that nothing could discompose the Peace and Tranquility of his Mind, any more than interrupt the Progress of his Charity. Such a steddiness and composure of Soul under the Disappointments we meet with in the World, is the Gift of God alone, and those only, who are his faithful Servants, can hope for the Happiness and Enjoyment of it. With some, it may not be difficult, to suppress or stifle for a while, that Fire, which burns within; *which consumes not the Flower, to Destruction,* * but to be unmov'd and calm, to bear Reproach and to be Chearful, to meet with Ingratitude,

E 2

and

* Job 31. 12.

and to go on doing good, to have just Occasion for Resentment, and to be resign'd under it, are unerring Testimonies of a Soul truly Pious; of a Soul, under the Influence of the holy Spirit of God, and full of Grace.

Thus this good Man, doubtless enjoy'd this internal Reward, nor was this the whole of what he did enjoy: For as it pleas'd God, to give him an Heart, to do these great Things in his Life time; as he gave him the Comfort of seeing with his Eyes; the good Works of his Hands; as he gave him the Benefit and Blessing of their Prayers, whom he had blessed with the Conveniencies of Life, for Body and Soul; so he gave him the high Pleasure of seeing the young Plants, which had been water'd with the Dew of his Bounty, grow up and flourish, and to become useful in the World; he gave him the agreeable Delight of knowing, that amongst the Aged, the Advantage of that Religious Retirement, had qualify'd many, to end their Days in Peace, and to enter, prepar'd in the properest Manner, upon an happy Immortality. He gave him the Satisfaction of knowing, that the Industry of almost innumerable Families was continu'd to their Support, by his Private, and by them, unknown Charity: And, above all these, he gave him an Heart, to give God all the Praise, for all these Blessings to Mankind.

So

So perfect was his Enjoyment of the internal Part of this Reward, nor was he less possess'd of that, in which the external does consist.

*Health, Length of Days, Riches and Honour, are Blessings, promis'd in the Word of God, to those, who are Religious, and forget not the Law of the Lord.** And how largely he shar'd every one of these, is not necessary to be insisted upon, when it is known to so many, how vigorous his Strength, how clear his Understanding, how quick his Apprehension, and how sound his Judgment continued, long beyond the Age of Man, even to reach, to the End almost, of his Eighty fifth Year, without Decay in his Understanding, without Labour or Sorrow. How plentifully his Riches flow'd in upon him, when his Cup at last overflows; and what the Honours have been, which always have been paid to him, by every good Man, the Testimonies of those, who hear me, excuse my enlarging upon any further, than that he is gather'd to his Fathers, *Full of good Works, full of Honour, and full of Days.*

Thus far he enjoy'd the whole of his Reward in this Life; and surely, as far as Man is able to judge, we may, without Presumption believe, that he is found acceptable in the Sight of God, and has receiv'd the Comfort

fort of, *Well done, thou good and faithful Servant, thou hast been faithful over a few Things, I will make thee Ruler over many Things. Enter thou into the Joy of the Lord,* * and will with ineffable Pleasure at the last Day, hear that blessed Sentence, which shall then be pronounc'd, by the well beloved Son of God, saying, *Come thou blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepar'd for you, from the Foundation of the World.* †

To conclude then, May it please Almighty God of his Infinite Goodness, to grant unto us all, that we may learn from his bright Pattern, to Think, to Speak, to Act; that we may learn from him to Love, to Give and to Forgive: In short, as much as in us lies, that we may learn in the whole Course of our Lives, to copy so well, that which he led, that we may, at length, hope likewise, to die the Death of this Righteous Man, and that our last End may be like his.

Grant this, O Heavenly Father, for the Sake of thy well beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour; to whom with the Holy Ghost, three Persons and one God, be ascrib'd, as is most due, all Honour and Praise, and Thanksgiving, now and ever. Amen.

* St. Mat. 25.

† Ibid. 25. 34.

